(b) whether almost all the SAARC member countries have agreed upon the venue;

(c) whether this has come as a diplomatic setback for India having lobbied for an alternate venue; and

(d) whether India is likely to decline the invitation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The next SAARC Summit is to be held in Islamabad. Pakistan has proposed dates in January 2003 for the Summit.

(b) Yes.

(c) SAARC Sumits are hosted by member States in alphabetical rotation. After Nepal, it is the turn of Pakistan to host it. India did not lobby for an alternate venue, and the question of a diplomatic set-back for India does not arise.

(d) The question of an invitation will arise only after the dates have been agreed to by all member States.

Export of sensitive material to Iraq

1705. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have studied the dossier presented by the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons last month, on an Indian company found involved in export of sensitive material to Iraq to help its chemicals weapons programme;

(b) whether this company was under watch for a long time;

(c) if so, the reasons for not taking preventive measures to check export of such sensitive cargo;

(d) whether Government have ordered any inquiry in this regard; and

(e) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) An Indian company was mentioned by name in the dossier on Iraq released by the British Government. Government studied the dossier and asked the British Government the basis of their report. The British Government's response referred to among other things newspaper reports in India about the said company's involvement in exports of sensitive materials.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) to (e) The concerned firm has been investigated for violating domestic export control regulations including the Customs Act 1962 and the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act 1992. After due investigation, the importer-exporter code number of the firm was suspended on August 22, 2002 for violation of provisions of the EXIM Policy 1997-2002. Based on these investigations, courts have taken cognisance in certain cases, which are pending final disposal.

Missing Indians in UAE

1706. SHRI S.M. LAL JAN BASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received representations on missing persons working in United Arab Emirates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in finding such persons;

(d) whether it is a fact that Indian Embassy is slow in activating itself to search and locate the missing persons; and

(e) what steps Government are taking to expedite enquiries and action on missing persons, particularly Indian women workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) During the current year, eight complaints were received by our Embassy in Abu Dhabi, of which four cases have been solved. In the remaining four cases a response is pending from the U.A.E. Foreign Office/sponsors. Our Consulate in Dubai received four such complaints. These complaints have been referred to the local authorities. The responses are awaited.

(c) The delay is mainly due to the lack of complete details (particularly addresses etc.) of the missing persons. In some cases, the missing persons deliberately change their personal particulars or, remain incommunicado for personal reasons.

(d) No. Prompt action is taken in respect of each such complaint.